DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 082 038 CE 000 336

AUTHOR	Mathewson, Beatrice M.; Staropoli, Charles J.
TITLE	Career Education in the Elementary School.
PUB DATE	Oct 73
NOTE	11p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Career Education; Educational Objectives; *Elementary Education; Elementary Schools; *Vocational Counseling

ABSTRACT

The aim of education should be total utilization of the abilities of the entire population. Career education must start early enough for the child to prepare his skills for the world of work. A structured career exploration curriculum is divided into awareness, orientation, simulation, and development. The first step, awareness, is designed to develop a positive self-concept in the child and to show him how education helps him reach his goals. The elementary and middle school should develop flexibility, build attitudes, provide basic knowledge, and expose the child to as many careers as possible by utilizing the standard curriculum with shifts of emphasis. Vocational guidance counseling at the elementary level is a vital function of the program. Technical, cultural, social, recreational, consumer, and occupational benefits can accrue from a career education program which develops the whole child. (MS)

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ED 082038

CAREER EDUCATION

in the

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BY
Beatrice M. Mathewson and Charles J. Staropoli

The rapid changes occurring in society are constantly making new demands on every phase of life. No where is this change more evident than in the world of work. Each new technical advance creates new jobs and, conversely, eliminates old ones. One huge earth moving vehicle can move more dirt in an hour than could one hundred men with shovels and barrows working for a day in pre World War II highway construction. The unskilled laborer with a shovel has all but been eliminated and in his place has developed the need for the vehicle operator, diesel engine specialist, hydraulic expert, welder and mechanic to keep the machine working.

Public education has a responsibility to meet the needs demanded by the changing society. Education is committed to the success of more than a small portion of students. Its aim should be total utilization of the abilities of the entire population. There is a critical need for changes in our educational programs to accomplish these aims. There is no longer any justification for turning out students with no particular skill. The need for a man whose only talent is handling a shovel or swinging a pick is gone. The old idea that a man can always wash dishes if he can't do anything else is gone. Recently an announcement was made of a new forty seat restaurant operated by only four employees--two cooks and two waitresses. Ninety-four percent of the dishes used are disposable, the announcement read, thus eliminating dishwashing and busboy jobs.

Along with the need for change there is evidence of dissatisfaction with education publically expressed by the failure of referendums all across the country. The increased dropout rate certainly indicates a lack of relevance

SP 006 921
CE 000 336

of much of the course work given today's students. Today's unemployment rate and the increasing number of so-called unemployables points directly to some lack on the part of the educational system to fully meet the needs of society relative to the world of work.

In almost every school system there is included an area of vocational education. But the question is, and part of the problem stems from, whether or not career education is started soon enough. Students are being forced to make job decisions and career choices with very little background or training. Eighty percent of the students in high school are enrolled either in the academic or general course with only twenty percent in vocational training. This eighty percent , with little background or training, may be frustrated and may make poor decisions and as a result encounter disappointment when they come face to face with the details of the career they have chosen. And a further complication arises for the college bound student for it has been determined that eighty-five percent of the jobs to be available in the next ten years require training other than college.

The educational process places the child in kindergarten and for the next thirteen years prepares him to take his place in society. And yet what place he takes in society (a place which ultimately will determine the extent of his contribution to society) is often a catch-as-catch-can situation, explored only in the latter years of his public education and even then, it often is confined to relatively brief counseling in the guidance office.

Simply put, there is a need to integrate into the curriculum, now mainly concerned with the teaching of a variety of general skills, the application of skills to the world of work. In such a curriculum the student can match his acquired skills to the career of greatest interest in a step-by-step, year-by-year program which, upon graduation sends him into the market place with a <u>marketable</u> skill.

It is not too early to begin career exploration the day the child enters school. Every skill the child masters has dozens of applications in the world of work. To do justice to the child, all must be explored. It must also be a structured curriculum designed to give the student as complete an exposure as possible beginning with a broad investigation and narrowed to the moment of decision when he makes his final choice. One such structure divides the career exploration into four categories:

Career Awareness -- Elementary grades beginning with kindergarten. Jobs are explained through instruction and lecture, field trips and projects using tools.

Career Orientation -- Middle school. Exploration of job areas breaking down a field into the particular skills. For example, the aviation industry includes more than pilots. There are flight engineers, radiomen, stewardesses, airfoil and power plant mechanics, sheet metal workers, avionics technicians (maintenance of radar, autopilots, guidance systems, etc.), baggage handlers, food handlers, fuel service, etc.

Career Simulation -- Late middle school and early high school. Basic skills are applied to a job area on a simulated basis.

Career Development -- Late high school, vo-tech, college or on the job training. Teaching proficiency in a chosen career.

This approach will provide several positive outcomes directly benefitting the student. Occupational or career explorations are aimed at providing the student with a choice of jobs he will find rewarding but at the same time will have effects on the other phases of his life.

1. He will be a contributing member of his community.
2. He will have a greater appreciation of the contribution of his fellow man to society.
3. He will have a better understanding of the world in which he lives.
4. He will learn how to effectively interact with his fellow man.

The purpose of this paper is to focus on the part to be played by the elementary school within the overall career education program.

EARLY ECUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The elementary school must be concerned with personality development, development of talents and dispersion of information.

Developing a success oriented attitude in the child is vital to his career success. This development, to be effective, must have its beginning in the elementary school years. The child must discover what type of person he is and what type of person he would like to be. Since the child comes to the school at an age when his is flexible, the school can and must concern itself in these early years with developing a positive self-concept, motivating him and building aspirations. He can be guided into doing the things he is capable of doing well. Helping him discover his abilities as well as his likes and dislikes are possible in the elementary grades and necessary to a positive self-concept. LeBenne and Greene state "to help a child develop a positive self-concept, one must help him select experiences which provide a challege, and at the same time, help him maximize his opportunities for success".[1]

In dispersing information to the child, it is necessary to show him how education functions realistically in terms of his potential. School must become something more to a child than a legal requirement to be endured from the age of seven through sixteen. He must become acquainted with what education is. Why does he need it? What can he expect from his education? What type of education is needed for a particular job? He must be oriented in these early years on a course which will become progressively narrower each year as he advances toward a career choice. Within the education framework it is possible to introduce the child on the elementary level to the ever expanding variety of career opportunities available in the changing world.

1 Wallace D. LaBenne and Bert I. Greene. Educational Implications of Self-Concept Theory, Pacific Palisades, California. Goodyear Publishing Co., Inc., 1969. pp. 29-30.

There is a need to prevent in the future some of the problems facing the nation today. There is currently a surplus of over educated people for whom no jobs are available. Realistic information is lacking in job needs of the market place. A more careful assessment must be made of future job opportunities. Implementation of a good career guidance program in the curriculum could minimize some of the problems in the job market today. Still more and more young people are going into the job market with no particular employable skill. Many leave school with a general education and no idea of what they want to do. Their career is often decided on the basis of what job is open when they are looking for work. The entire educational program from kindergarten through twelfth grade must meet the problem in the future.

Beginning in the elementary grades, all children should be taught to appreciate all types of work. They should realize a college bound student is really aiming at a life work beyond college just as the non-college bound student is aiming at a life work beyond high school. College, technical training in high school, vocational education programs and on the job training are all a means to an end. The end, or goal, is that ability to function satisfactorily in society and fulfill the job to the best of his ability. John Dewey point out over fifty years ago that elementary education is largely vocational but implies merely an ability to accept a position to carry out the plans of others. His plea was for an "industrial education" to prepare each child to render services of a useful sort in society and equip him to act on his own initiative. Calling for a merger rather than a separation of traditional and vocational education, Dewey told a meeting of the Public Education Association in 1917 "it will . . . utilize active and manual pursuits as the means of developing constructive, inventive and creative power of mind. It will select the materials and techniques of the trades not for the sake of

producing skilled workers for hire in definite trades, but for the sake of securing industrial intelligence -- a knowledge of the conditions and processes so that the individual may be able to make his own choices and his own adjustments, and be master, so far as in him lies, of his own economic fate."[2]

To secure such goals, a strong positive self-concept and a success oriented personality is necessary. This cannot be accomplished overnight or in a few hours spent in the office of the guidance counselor. It must develop with the child as he progresses through the public school system. And what Dewey said then, is pernaps even more appropriate today. Despite a still alarming dropout rate, a higher percentage of students complete high school. They move into a job market requiring skilled workers. To send children into the job market with no particular skills or without some narrowing of interest in a particular field seems a shortcoming on the part of education. William P. Lear, the electronic genius and industrialist who made possible the car radio, invented the eight track stereo, the autopilot and built the Lear Jet, was a school dropout. In his latestproject, development of a steam turbine motor to replace the gasoline engine in automobiles, he employs 125 scientists, engineers and draftsmen indicating that all of them had to be well trained and highly skilled individuals. He commented that he, with only an eighth grade education, probably couldn't meet the education requirements necessary today to get a job in his own factory. Such is the changing world for which the student must be prepared.

2 John Dewey, Education Today. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1940. pp. 131-132.

THE INTEGRATED APPROACH

Career education is not new. As stated earlier, John Dewey suggested and supported the concept over fifty years ago. The vocational or technical high school has been on the scene for many years. Industrial arts or vocational education has been in many high school programs for an equal time. This discussion, however, is for an integrated curriculum rather than having career education regarded as a separate and distinctly identifiable form of secondary education. It will, as a result, mean some changes must be made in the education system to put career education into its proper perspective.

Process and concept should be considered more important than product and fact. For example, it is customary to take a class to the office of a daily newspaper. The objective of the teacher is to bring the children more knowledge of what goes into the printing of a newspaper. This is product and fact. A simple change of objective from what is a newspaper to what is required in the way of job skills to produce a newspaper brings the trip into the area of career education. Back in the classroom the children can determine what skills they are learning would be necessary for a career in the newspaper field.

Children should not be rushed into a career choice. Schools have a responsibility to provide them with clear conceptual information, ideas and pictures of the world of work. Further, they should understand that preparation for a career is what education is all about.

It seems consistent with educational aims today that career awareness and exploration should be a part of the school curriculum. The role of the elementary and middle school should be to develop flexibility, build attitudes, provide basic knowledge and expose the child to as many careers as is possible.

The place of the standard areas of curriculum: social studies, science,

mathematics and language arts are not reduced in importance in a career education program. They become more relevant to the student inasmuch as they no longer are studied as an end to themselves but as building blocks by which the student moves forward to the time he makes a career choice. The study of classics and classic forms in all fields is still relevant to the end of instilling disciplined thought in the student. And throughout the education process, the education itself can be readily taught as the means to an end--the end being the career. From a very practical standpoint, elementary education, particularly in the primary grades, is essentially vocational. The child learns to read for a very worthwhile reason--to be able to read. He learns to tell time so he can tell what time it is. He masters the first fundamentals of arithmetic which opens countless areas of exploration in his own life--something as simple as understanding that he has lived six years because he is six years old.

In one fourth grade project children studying the plains areas in social studies wrote letters to various chambers of commerce in appropriate cities. Learning to write a letter in the proper form was given secondary place in the project. The emphasis was that this was a necessary skill needed to obtain information not readily available any other way. It was a lesson in communications, language arts, social studies and spelling. Carrying this one more step the children learn the importance of letters in the world of work as a means of communication and information gathering.

Indeed, the standard curriculum becomes a part of the career education program and the career education progam becomes part of the standard curriculum.

CAREER GUIDANCE

Guidance on the elementary level in a career education program is a responsibility shared between the teachers and the guidance counselor. However, the importance of having vocational guidance counseling available on the elementary level should not be minimized. It is a vital function in the program. Knapp states that "understanding the world of work, developing appreciation of all kinds of worthwhile work, and eventually fitting one's self successfully into the world of work should be the objective of every boy and girl in the elementary school. Vocational guidance should be introduced early in the school life of the child and be continous as long as the child remains in school, and even until he is adjusted to some worthwhile vocation for which he has aptitude and interest".[3]

The role of the guidance counselor will be that of the expiditer and resource person. He must be constantly alert to the changing job market; keep abreast of new jobs resulting from new technology. He must also be available for counseling in matters of personal problems which often have vocational overtones and connections, particularly in developing a success oriented child with a positive self-concept in a career oriented program.

The teacher in the classroom situation becomes a vital key in guidance through her role as the "introducer", bringing her children in contact with the world of work through classroom instruction, vocational projects and field trips. Special teachers have an important role. The art teacher, for instance, can prepare charts or bulletin boards deomonstrating the application of the various art forms she teaches to the world of work. The physical education teacher will have to put new emphasis on the team approach to meet a common goal. These changes will necessitate intensive and continous re-training for all of the professional staff.

[3] Robert H. Knapp, Guidance in the Elementary School. Boston: 1959. p. 221

BENEFITS OF A CAREER EDUCATION

The aim of a career education is to develop in the child a concept of the world of work and [illegible] prepare him for his adult role in society. Does the introduction of [illegible]l education, industrial arts or industrial technology, all of which are names applied to the career side of an integrated curriculum, extend to other phases of the child's development? Those concerned with the development of the whole child and what effect career education would have, can see positive benefits in every area of personality growth. These are some of the results which accrue from a career education program:

1. Technical -- Children become familiar with machines and their functions. They develop an understanding of the differences in woods, plastics and metals and what can be created from them.

2. Cultural -- Understanding the background of a product or service leads to greater appreciation of the individual and his skill. For instance, a child visiting Williamsburg sees furniture as the result of the craftsman's skill and learns what goes into the creation of such a product.

3. Social -- Group oriented vocational projects develop the student's ability to get along with others in a work situation.

4. Recreational -- This is an avocational function. Learning to paint so that someday the student will be able to paint his own house. Development of mechanical skills will teach many valuable skills in home maintenance, such as minor auto repair, fixing the lawn mower, etc.

5. Consumer -- Understanding materials and functions will enable the student to be a more intelligent consumer which will be economically advantageous throughout his life.

6. Occupational function -- Career education introduced on the elementary level better enables the child to determine a career choice on the secondary level and thus develop marketable skills for better assurance of a worthwhile job upon graduation.

In summary, a career education does develop the "whole" child. Technical training in the regular curriculum meets the needs of society for the skilled worker, gives new meaning to education itself and, at an earlier age, develops long range goals leading to a more positive self-concept and a success oriented personality.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM

Using the consortium approach it is felt the legislators and educators can work together through the State Department of Public Instruction to help solve the career problems facing the young people of today and those of future generations. The need to solve the problem is clear. A number of schools in the middle and high school levels are making great progress in this field. However, they are able to help only a portion of those students who need assistance in career development. Judging from reports given by vocation guidance personnel, the number of students turned down by existing vocational schools, and the continuing dropout rate, it is obvious more must be done in preparing students for a worthwhile career. To realize a uniform career education program in the schools five problems must be solved.

1. Teachers--Eighty-five percent of elementary school teachers are women and very few have been in a hard core world of work position. A similar situation exists with male teachers. Training of teachers is needed in both course work and actual or vicarious work experience.

2. Guidance--Guidance counseling will be needed on all levels of the elementary school.

3. Program coordinators--Well rounded individuals, knowledgeable of the world of work will be required for adequate implementation.

4. Curriculum design--A unique curriculum is needed.

5. Facilities--Workrooms will be needed for instruction involving tools and materials not suited to normal classroom facilities. Adequate storage space must be provided for materials. Portable equipment will be needed for the teacher's use in a classroom situation.